



The Iowa Afterschool Alliance (IAA) Newsletter is a monthly venue of information and updates on afterschool programs and policies.

For more information, please contact Brooke Findley at bfindley@sppg.com or 515.243.2000.

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Update from the IAA Network Leads

Welcome back! Although most of us don't take the summer off, children and youth are gearing up for a new year of learning and we're all gearing up to help them succeed in doing so. Along with math and reading skills, our students will be learning about new and emerging technologies and other applied skills.

The IAA is gearing up to begin the planning phase for Expanded Learning Pilots in two communities across the state. The pilots will seek to improve graduation rates and skill acquisition by linking middle and high-school youth with opportunities on community college campuses, which may include certification, dual-credit, and internship programs. In August, the IAA has received a number of letters of interest, showing unique partnerships between schools, community colleges, and other community organizations.

It is our hope that these pilots will be successful in increasing the number of students graduating on time and the diversity of opportunities students experience upon graduation. Stay tuned for more information on the pilots – we will need the help of all our partners to make them successful.

Thanks so much for all you do to improve the outcomes for Iowa's children and youth.

Sincerely,

Brooke Findley and Michelle Rich
IAA Network Coordinators



Every Child Matters' Step Up for Kids, October 5-9, 2009

Due to the success of last year's events for Step Up for Kids, Every Child Matters will host a week-long event marking this year's Step Up for Kids. For more information, please contact Tom LaPointe of Every Child Matters at tlapointe@everychildmatters.org. For more information on Every Child Matters Iowa, please visit their website at www.everychildmatters.org.

Let's Keep the "Lights On" for our Afterschool Programs – Lights On Afterschool to be Celebrated October 22 this Year

Lights On Afterschool, a national celebration of our communities' afterschool programs, will be celebrated on October 22 this year. Nationally, over 7,500 programs and 1 million individuals rally for afterschool programs during Lights On celebrations across the country. The Afterschool Alliance has a number of tools and resources you can use to plan your own event, or support an event hosted by a partner or collaborating organization.

Event ideas, tips, and a toolkit for planning are available on the [Afterschool Alliance website](#). Make your event unique to your community – it may be a gathering of local community leaders and families that involves games, skits, or demonstrations from children and youth in your programs. You may choose to highlight the ways afterschool programs have impacted your community through improved grades, attendance, or fewer behavioral referrals during school.

One million Americans will participate in more than 7,500 *Lights On Afterschool* celebrations across the nation. [Register today](#) to make sure you get your free *Lights On Afterschool* promotional posters, event planning emails and updates and to be included on an online list of events and raffle drawings. New [Lights On items](#) are now available to order for your events - get a jump on the shipping rush and order today.

For more information on *Lights On Afterschool*, please visit the [Afterschool Alliance website](#).

Planning an event in Iowa? Please let IAA staff know by emailing Michelle Rich at mrich@sppg.com. We can provide you with additional resources and technical assistance for planning and hosting your own event.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Update: Race to the Top Criteria Released

The U.S. Department of Education has released eligibility criteria for the Race to the Top competitive grant program. The Race to the Top Fund provides competitive grants to encourage and reward states that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; implementing ambitious plans in the four education reform areas described

in the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (ARRA); and achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring that students are prepared for success in college and careers.



The U.S. Department of Education is proposing to use the 19 criteria outlined below as guidelines for awarding Race to the Top Fund grants. Only two of the proposed 19 criteria are absolute requirements to apply: States must have been approved by the Education Department for stabilization funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (most already have been), and states must not have any laws in place barring the use of student-achievement data for evaluating teachers and principals. Please note: these criteria are only a draft proposal, and the public has 30 days to provide feedback to the Department before the criteria are finalized in October.

Standards and assessments

- » Developing and adopting common standards
- » Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments
- » Making the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments

Data systems to support instruction

- » Implementing a statewide longitudinal-data system
- » Making a state's data system accessible to key stakeholders (for example, parents, teachers, community members)
- » Using data to improve instruction

Improving teachers and leaders

- » Providing alternative pathways for aspiring teachers and principals
- » Differentiating teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance, including supporting merit-pay programs
- » Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals
- » Reporting the effectiveness of teacher- and principal-preparation programs
- » Providing effective support to teachers and principals

Turning around struggling schools

- » Intervening in the lowest-performing schools and districts
- » Increasing the supply of high-quality charter schools, including not imposing a cap on their expansion
- » Turning around struggling schools

Overall Criteria

- » Demonstrating significant progress in the four education reform "assurances" and using other stimulus funding for reform
- » Making education funding a priority, including not severely cutting K-12 education aid in 2009 from 2008 levels

- » Enlisting statewide support and commitment, including from charter school authorizers and teachers' unions
- » Raising achievement and closing gaps
- » Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans



Source: U.S. Department of Education

For more information on the Race to the Top, visit Edweek.org, the Afterschool Alliance website, and the U.S. Department of Education website.

Afterschool Matters: Apprenticeship and Afterschool

Afterschool Matters (ASM), a Chicago-based out-of-school program, is breaking ground and providing youth with hands-on learning opportunities in everything ranging from art to science to technology. The program provides Chicago youth with valuable pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and internship opportunities in a range of fields. The Vision Statement for ASM is that “Chicago’s teens need to believe they have a future, and adults need to help them get there.”

This effectively sums up the collaborative approach to out-of-school learning that ASM is using to engage youth in new and different ways. By involving the entire community, ASM has created a program with unique opportunities for youth to learn on the job in nearly any field of interest and has engaged a wide range of community partners.

The Iowa Afterschool Alliance hopes to develop similar programs in local communities here in Iowa through its Expanded Learning Day Pilot Initiative. The initial planning phase will begin in October of this year, and it is the IAA’s desire to have pilot programs ready to serve students for the 2010-2011 school year. With increased demand on students’ and schools’ time, the IAA is striving to develop relationships between afterschool programs, community colleges, and community partners to connect middle and high school youth to opportunities to expand their skills, perhaps in the form of on the job training, during out of school time. For more information on this new initiative, please contact [Brooke Findley](#) or [Michelle Rich](#).

Check out the [Afterschool Matters website](#) for more information on their innovative program.

The What Works Clearinghouse Releases New Practice Guide: Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) invites you to look at their newest practice guide, [Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement](#).

Out-of-school time programs can enhance academic achievement by helping students learn outside the classroom. The five recommendations in this guide are intended to help district and school administrators, out-of-school program providers, and educators design out-of-school time programs that will increase learning for students. The guide also describes the research supporting each recommendation, how to carry out each recommendation, and how to address roadblocks that might arise in implementing them.

Secret Education Funding Recipes Revealed: Demystifying the Title I, Part A Funding Formulas

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act authorizes substantial grants—almost \$14 billion for the fiscal year that ended in 2008—to support the education of children living in areas where low-income families are concentrated. Yet the funding formulas that determine the amount of money granted to each school district are not necessarily compatible with the law's intent.

Secret Recipes Revealed, a paper released by the Center for American Progress, systematically unpacks the formulas to reveal the specific causes of targeting failure. It also highlights the sensible, progressive notions embraced by the current formulas:

- Honoring states' efforts to leverage their revenue capacity for the purpose of funding education.
- Partly correcting for inequity in education funding within states.
- Safeguarding districts and states against precipitous drops in funding.
- Respecting funding challenges peculiar to small states.

Download the full report [here](#).

Interactive Map: [Title I Education Grants](#)

Recent Survey of Afterschool Programs Finds Programs Serving High Need Populations with Fewer Resources

Uncertain Times 2009: Recession Imperiling Afterschool Programs and the Children They Serve, a recent survey of afterschool programs, finds that afterschool programs are serving a high need population, struggling to maintain their funding and are worried about how the recession will affect future funding. Nearly all respondents to the web-based survey say that more children in their communities could benefit from afterschool programs, if programs were available. 69 percent report that funding is less than secure for the next 1 to 2 years and 83 percent report funding is not secure for next 3 to 5 years.

For summaries and reports of the findings, visit the [Afterschool Alliance website](#).

Upcoming Events, Professional Development, and Funding Opportunities

Midwest Afterschool Science Academy, December 2-4, 2009 in Kansas City, MO

The Kansas Enrichment Network (KEN) and Missouri AfterSchool Network (MASN) are collaborating to put on the Midwest Afterschool Science Academy on December 2-4, 2009 in Kansas City, MO. In addition to quality, hands-on science curriculum for frontline staff and professional development models for administrators to take back to their communities, the event will explore advancing school-community partnerships, afterschool science as a means to level the educational equity issues, engaging science businesses in afterschool, and using authentic assessments of afterschool learning to influence policy.



Main topics of exploration will include:

- » Positive Youth Development/Quality Afterschool Programming
- » Quality Science Education for All
- » The processes of inquiry and experiential learning
- » Implementing high-quality Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) experiences in youth programs
- » Engaging underrepresented populations in the sciences
- » Afterschool Science Professional Development
- » School/Community Partnerships through Science

To register and for additional information, please visit the [Midwest Afterschool Science Academy website](#).

PEAK (Practices that Engage and Attract Kids) Afterschool Webinars

Join McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning) experts online this August and September to learn practical strategies for PEAK performance in afterschool programs.

Upcoming webinars:

- **September 2, 2009** (11:00 a.m.–12:00 noon MT) [Deepening Student Understanding with Good Questions in Afterschool](#). Review the research behind higher-level questioning and learn about several ready-to-use tools to increase your questioning techniques.
- **September 16, 2009** (11:00 a.m.–12:00 noon MT) [English-Language Learning in Afterschool Programs: Vocabulary Development](#). Learn fun and interactive ways to teach new vocabulary to ELL students in an afterschool setting.
- **September 30, 2009** (11:00 a.m.–12:00 noon MT) [Afterschool Games & Activities that Build Academic Vocabulary](#). Learn how to use exciting, research-based approaches—including games and other activities—to build students' academic vocabulary in afterschool settings.

McREL is offering the five one-hour webinars for \$49 per webinar per connection. There's no limit to the number of people who can participate through each connection. For more information, visit the [PEAK website](#).

Check Out IAA's Facebook Page!

IAA has recently created a Facebook page. Through our page, you can find the latest information and updates regarding IAA and its activities, as well as links to relevant resources and funding opportunities. To search for the IAA page, just type the Iowa Afterschool Alliance on the search box at www.facebook.com. However, please continue to visit the IAA website for the listing of all resources at www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org.

Reminder

As we continue our work in promoting afterschool programs, below are words from a famous American to remind us why we do the work we do.



"A child is a person who is going to carry on whatever you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting and when you are gone, attend to those things which you think are important. You may adopt all the policies you please, but how they will be carried out depends on him. He will assume control of your cities, states, and nations. He is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities, and corporations. Your books are going to be judged, accepted, or condemned by him. The fate of humanity is in his hands. So it might be well to pay him some attention."

- Abraham Lincoln